

### Discourse and European Integration

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WORKING PAPER

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# Discourse and European Integration

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Ruth Wodak

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# DISCOURSE AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Ruth Wodak

## Abstract

Integrating theories about discourse (Discourse Studies; DS) with social science theories allows to grasp the dynamic and fluid co-construction of European identities, both top-down and bottom-up. Such interdisciplinary approaches systematically deconstruct the everyday workings of European institutions and support our understanding of the impact of traditional and social media in their production and reproduction of pro-European or Eurosceptic sentiments and attitudes. In this chapter, I first present some important characteristics of Discourse Studies and Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), specifically of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). I then, secondly, summarize the most relevant discursive research based on a range of theories and methodological approaches on European integration. Thirdly, I illustrate the interdisciplinary nexus of discourse-oriented European studies with a case study on the mediatization and politicization of the refugee crisis in Austria, from 2015-2016. I specifically focus on legitimization strategies and argumentation schemes which accompany the implementation of ever more restrictive policy decisions.

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## 1. Introduction

Since the 1980s, the transformation of the former Eastern bloc, Germany's reunification, the enlargement and deeper integration of the European Union, together with persistent debates on im/migration focused attention on issues of historical and cultural identities. In the Member States of the European Union (EU), the propagation of a new European identity was accompanied by the emergence or re-emergence of fragmented and unstable national and ethnic identities. Seemingly established collective, national identities became contested political terrain and the focus of political struggles. Research focusing on the constitutive role of discourse – and particularly language – in the integration of the EU, the construction of European (and national) identities, has drawn on the valuable contributions in historiography, sociology and political science (Wodak 2017a; Wodak et al. 2009).

Relating and integrating theories about discourse, communication, text and talk, image and sign with social science theories allows to grasp the dynamic and fluid co-construction of European identities, both top-down and bottom-up. Such interdisciplinary approaches can systematically deconstruct the everyday workings of European institutions, or support our understanding of the impact of traditional and social media in their production and reproduction of pro-European or Eurosceptic sentiments and attitudes. Indeed, investigating European developments implies the systematic, qualitative and quantitative analysis of both the discourses of the European and national elites as well as of the European peoples, in multiple formal and informal public spheres. On a similar vein, Carter et al. (2015) argue that “dominant visions [of Europe/EU] have tended towards imagining Europe as an object – an entity of one sort or another, but an object nonetheless” (Carter et al. 2015: 2). Instead, they embrace a focus on a “more process-oriented, collectivist, and interpretivist set of ontological assumptions [about Europe]” (Carter et al. 2015: 3); these assumptions point to the need for more constructivist and discourse-oriented theories and methodologies to understand new developments in Europe.

In this chapter, I first present some important characteristics of Discourse Studies (DS) and Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), specifically of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). DS investigates, broadly speaking, the strategies and structures of written and spoken text and talk in context whereas CDS analyzes complex social problems which inter alia comprise a linguistic/discursive dimension. The DHA, one of the main approaches in the CDS-paradigm, focuses – apart from the inherent problem-orientation –, primarily on the interdependence of discourse and socio-political change. I then, secondly, summarize the most relevant discursive research strands on European integration; due to space restrictions, this overview necessarily remains incomplete. Thirdly, I illustrate the interdisciplinary nexus of discourse-oriented European studies with a case study on the mediatization and politicization of the refugee crisis in Austria, from 2015-16 (Rheindorf/Wodak 2017a, b; Wodak 2017b).

## 2. Discourse Studies and Critical Discourse Studies

### 2.1 The “Discursive Turn”

Discourse Studies (DS) is a heterogeneous field involving scholars from a range of disciplines. Many contest the idea that it derives from linguistics, even in the larger sense of the term. To this extent, DS could be considered to be not only a trans-disciplinary or even post-disciplinary project but rather one which runs counter to the division of knowledge into specialized disciplines and sub-disciplines (e.g., Angermüller et al. 2014). Generally, “discourse” is used in two different ways: a) as a pragmatic understanding, predominant among linguistic and micro-sociological discourse analysts, who consider discourse as a process of contextualizing texts, language in use, the situated production of speech acts or a turn-taking practice; b) a socio-historical understanding, preferred by more macro-sociological discourse theorists interested in power, for whom “discourse” refers to the ensemble of verbal and non-verbal practices of large social communities.

In order to have some meaning for somebody, texts need to be contextualized (Wittgenstein 1967). For discourse analysts, therefore, meaning is a fragile and contested construction of the discourse participants. While discourse may take place between the physically present participants of an interaction in an institutional setting, it can also be produced in and by large communities mediated through newspapers and television. Embedded in larger socio-historical configurations and structures, discursive practices can operate with various types of media – oral, written, multimodal, allowing large or small numbers of participants to communicate over shorter or longer distances.

Moreover, DS subscribe to the constructivist view that all social and political order is constructed and re-constructed in communication (see Risse forthcoming). DS have not only been a source of methodological innovation but have also crucially inspired theoretical debate in the social sciences and humanities. A gap sometimes exists between the more epistemological and political interests of discourse theorists and the methodological focus of discourse analysts, most notably in Europe: on the one hand, the rather abstract discourse theories in the wake of Michel Foucault (1972), Ernesto Laclau (1994) or Jürgen Habermas (2001), and, on the other hand, discourse analytical strands in the more empirical, object-oriented sense of large-scale quantitative corpus analysis or more qualitative, micro-sociological studies of situated practices. Even if the emphasis is placed sometimes more on theory and sometimes more on detailed analysis, DS only exist as a field when both discourse theory and discourse analysis are integrated in the practice of discourse research.

### 2.2 Critical Discourse Studies

The significant difference between DS and Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) lies in the constitutive problem-oriented interdisciplinary approach of the latter. CDS does not therefore study a linguistic unit per se (such as sentence structure, metaphors, pronouns, and so forth) but rather social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multi/ inter/ trans-disciplinary and multi-method approach. The

objects under investigation do not have to be related to negative or exceptionally “serious” social or political experiences or events; indeed, this is a frequent misunderstanding of the aims and goals of CDS and of the term “critical” which does not mean “negative” as in common sense usage (Chilton et al. 2010). Any social phenomenon lends itself to critical investigation, to be challenged and not taken for granted.

CDS has never been and has never attempted to be or to provide one single or specific theory (Wodak/Meyer 2015a, b). Indeed, Van Dijk (2008: 823) has pointed to “the lack of theory about the norms and principles of its [CDA’s] own critical activity”. More specifically, what is needed – Forchtner (2011: 2) argues – is an “extensive elaboration of why one’s critique is particularly reliable”. As Van Leeuwen (2006: 234) rightly states, “critical discourse analysts engage not only with a range of discourse analytical paradigms, but also with critical social theory. In more recent work social theory may even dominate over discourse analysis”.

Regarding the concept of “ideology”, for example, Van Dijk defines “ideologies” as the

*“world views” that constitute “social cognition”: schematically organized complexes of representations and attitudes with regard to certain aspects of the social world, e.g. the schema [...] whites have about blacks, which may feature a category ‘appearance’ (Van Dijk 1993: 258, 1998).*

Fairclough, on the other hand, proposes a Marxist view of “ideology” in which ideologies are “constructions of practices from particular perspectives [...] which ‘iron out’ the contradictions, dilemmas and antagonisms of practices in ways which accord with the interests and projects of domination” (Chouliaraki/Fairclough 1999: 26).

It is important to distinguish between ideology (and other frequently used terms such as stance/ beliefs/ opinions/ Weltanschauung/ position) and discourse (Purvis/Hunt 1993: 474ff). Quite rightly, Purvis and Hunt state that these concepts “do not stand alone but are associated not only with other concepts but with different theoretical traditions” (Purvis/Hunt 1993: 474). Thus, “ideology” is usually (more or less) closely associated with the Marxist tradition, whereas “discourse” has gained much significance in the linguistic turn in modern social theory “by providing a term with which to grasp the way in which language and other forms of social semiotics not merely convey social experience but play some major part in constituting social objects (the subjectivities and their associated identities), their relations, and the field in which they exist” (Purvis/Hunt 1993: 474). The conflation of “ideology” and “discourse” thus leads, I believe, to an inflationary use of both ideologies and discourses, in which both concepts tend to simultaneously indicate texts, positioning and subjectivities as well as belief systems, structures of knowledge and social practices.

Power is another concept which is central to CDS, as it often analyses the language use of those in power, who are responsible for the existence of inequalities. Holzschleiter (2010) distinguishes three modes of exercising power in discourse: power in discourse is defined as actors’ struggles with different interpretations of meaning. Power over discourse is defined as possessing general “access to the stage” in macro- and micro contexts, i.e. processes of inclusion and exclusion. Finally, power of discourse relates to “the influence of historically grown macro-structures of meaning, of the conventions of the language game in which actors find themselves” (Holzschleiter 2010).



### 2.3 The Discourse-Historical Approach

In my case study below, I adopt the discourse-historical approach (DHA). This approach provides a vehicle for looking at latent power dynamics and the range of potentials in agents, because it integrates and triangulates knowledge about historical, intertextual sources and the background of the social and political fields within which discursive events are embedded. Moreover, the DHA distinguishes between three dimensions which constitute textual meanings and structures: the topics which are spoken/written about; the discursive strategies employed; and the linguistic means that are drawn upon to realize both topics and strategies.

The DHA is widely applied in research on identity politics, populism, discriminatory rhetoric, and so forth, and allows the systematic relating of macro- and mezzo-levels of contextualization to the micro-level analyses of texts. Such analyses consist primarily of two levels, an “entry-level analysis” focusing on the thematic dimension of texts, and an “in-depth analysis” which deconstructs the coherence and cohesion of texts in detail. The general aim of the entry-level thematic analysis is to map out the contents of the texts being analyzed. The key analytical categories of thematic analyses are discourse topics, which, “conceptually, summarize the text, and specify its most important information” (van Dijk 1991: 113). The in-depth analysis, on the other hand, is informed by the research questions and consists of the identification of the genre (e.g., TV interview, policy paper, election poster, political speech or homepage), analysis of the macro-structure of the respective text, the strategies of identity construction and of the argumentation schemes, as well as of other means of linguistic realization it uses.

“Discourse” is defined as follows, emphasising argumentation (i.e. people with different opinions, attitudes and ideologies speaking and arguing about the same macro-topic) and the distinction between ideology and discourse as constitutive factors from the outset:

*[...] a cluster of context-dependent practices that are situated within specific fields of social action; socially constituted and socially constitutive; related to a macro-topic; linked to the argumentation about validity claims such as truth and normative validity, involving several social actors who (may) have different points of view. (Reisigl/Wodak 2009: 89)*

In the DHA, two further concepts emerge as salient for analyzing political events: first, “intertextuality” refers to the linkage of all texts to other texts, both in the past and in the present. Such links can be established through continued reference to a topic or to its main actors; through reference to the same events as other texts; or through the reappearance of a text’s main arguments in another text as well as certain syntactic (grammatical) and also rhetorical schemes and other tropes. The second important process is labeled “recontextualization”. By taking an argument, a topic, a genre, or a discursive practice out of context and restating/realizing it in a new context, we first observe the process of de-contextualization, and then, when the respective element is implemented in a new context, of recontextualization. The element then acquires a new meaning, because meanings are formed in use.

Conceptually, the empirical event under investigation is viewed as a phenomenon that has discursive manifestations across four heuristic levels of context (Wodak 2011b):

- i. the **immediate text of the communicative event** in question (a particular detailed transcript of talk; a specific newspaper article; a specific speech);
- ii. The **intertextual and interdiscursive relationship** between utterances, texts, genres and discourses (e.g. conversations with the same participants in different settings);
- iii. the **extra linguistic social** (e.g. physical gestures, facial expressions, postures, etc.) **and environmental** (e.g. room size and layout) **variables and institutional frames** (e.g. latent or formal hierarchical structure, informal power relations in a friendship, cultural constraints and conventions, etc.) of a specific 'context of situation'; and
- iv. The **broader socio-political and historical context** which discursive practices are embedded in and related to (e.g., knowledge derived from ethnography, study of the relationships in, and aspects of, the broader social and cultural macro-environment over time that influence the text, talk and conversations).

A thorough DHA ideally follows an eight-stage program, the eight steps are implemented recursively (see Reisigl/Wodak 2009 for more details):

1. **Activation and consultation of preceding theoretical knowledge** (i.e., recollection, reading and discussion of previous research).
2. **Systematic collection of data and context information** (depending on the research question, various discourses and discursive events, social fields as well as actors, semiotic media, genres and texts are focused on).
3. **Selection and preparation of data for the specific analyses** (selection and downsizing of data according to relevant criteria, transcription of tape recordings, etc.).
4. **Specification of the research question/s and formulation of assumptions** (on the basis of a literature review and a first skimming of the data).
5. **Qualitative pilot analysis, including a context analysis, macro-analysis and micro-analysis** (allows testing categories and initial assumptions as well as the further specification of assumptions; see example below).
6. **Detailed case studies** (of a whole range of data, primarily qualitatively, but in part also quantitatively).
7. **Formulation of critique** (interpretation of results, taking into account the knowledge of the relevant context and referring to the three dimensions of critique).
8. **Practical application of analytical results** (if possible, the results might be applied in or proposed for interventions aiming at having social impact and changing discourses).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This ideal-typical list is best realized in a large-scale interdisciplinary project with sufficient resources of time, personnel and money. Depending on the funding, time, and other constraints, smaller studies are, of course, useful and legitimate.

There exists a significant difference between Discourse Studies (DS) and Critical Discourse Studies (CDS): All CDS approaches endorse a problem-oriented interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of discourses about a range of aspects of European integration. CDS therefore studies social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multi/ inter/ trans-disciplinary and multi-method approach.

The discourse-historical approach (DHA) provides a vehicle for looking at latent power dynamics and the range of potentials in agents. It integrates and triangulates knowledge about historical, intertextual sources and the background of the social and political fields within which discursive events are embedded. The DHA distinguishes between three dimensions which constitute textual meanings and structures: the topics which are spoken/written about; the discursive strategies employed; and the linguistic means that are drawn upon to realize both topics and strategies.

### 3. Discourse and European Integration

DS and CDS have increasingly cross-fertilized the fields of International Relations and (European) Political Studies (e.g., Clemens 2017; Krzyżanowski 2010; Krzyżanowski/Oberhuber 2007; Millar/Wilson 2007; Muntigl et al. 2000; Musolff 2004; Wodak 2011a, b, 2015a, 2016; Zappettini 2015). And Political Science Studies have increasingly moved to acknowledge first, a discursive and interpretative turn (e.g., Carta/Morin 2014; Schmidt 2014; Kutter 2015), secondly, a post-structuralist turn (e.g., Howarth/Torring 2005), thirdly, an argumentative turn (e.g., Fisher/Forrester 1993), and finally, a spatial turn (e.g., Carter/Lawn 2015), in their research about European integration.

In this paper, I focus primarily on the discursive turn, and the theories, methodologies, and methods associated with discourse-oriented research. A range of definitions of relevant concepts such as “discourse, ideology, idea, meaning, metaphor, and narrative” can be detected which frequently differ from the rhetorical and linguistic origins of these terms. As Carta and Wodak (2015: 3f.) argue succinctly,

*Discourse analysis can be of great use in illuminating the way in which social discursive practices convey meaning to foreign policy discourses, through both contestation and communicative action. However, many scholars from neighbor-ing fields [...] frequently misunderstood and continue to misunderstand Discourse Studies and Critical Discourse Studies as – more or less – simple methodologies or even methods (i.e. toolkits). [...] However, we argue that all approaches in CDS draw on specific epistemologies and theories and are oriented towards investigating both theoretically and methodologically complex social phenomena. (Carter/Wodak 2015)*

European Studies have started to incorporate methodologies of qualitative and quantitative DS which transcend traditional content-analysis, while analyzing quality media and policy papers (e.g., Hutter et al. 2016) or speeches and other genres in the political field (e.g., Wiener 2008). To date, both more abstract and more empirically oriented studies are being conducted, i.e. studies drawing on abstract notions of

“discourse” without any systematic analysis of text, image or talk (e.g., Schmidt 2014 <sup>2</sup>); and, on the other hand, studies which operationalize their macro-theories while employing systematic text and discourse analysis (e.g., Hart/Cap 2014; Wodak/Krzyżanowski 2008).

Indeed, investigating European integration from a DS or CDS point of view allows relating the micro-level of the production, reproduction and dissemination of discourses of inclusion and exclusion across many fields and genres to the macro-strategies of top-down imposed policies and strategies in systematic ways (Wodak/Fairclough 2010). Thus, the dynamics of European integration can be traced in detail, while focusing on ruptures, continuities and discontinuities as well as on simultaneous and non-simultaneous developments in different EU member states, different political parties, across social fields and institutions, involving a huge range of actors and public spheres (politicians, journalists, experts, bureaucrats, academics, NGOs, and so forth). Such systematic in-depth analyses transcend the purely hermeneutic and intuitive, frequently only illustrative character of traditional qualitative social science research.

### *3.1 Identifying Europeanness*

As Torfing (2005: 3) maintains, “Post-structuralist discourse theory has transformed itself from an intellectual curiosity to a well-established political science research programme”. Focusing on the relation between identity politics and discourse from a “post-Marxist” perspective, Laclau (1994) discussed the emergence and transformation of political identities in contemporary society. He considers the articulation of discursive practices capable of establishing, challenging, and dismantling relations among discursive elements. A discourse, therefore, is interpreted as the temporary fixation of meaning(s) around “nodal points” which constitute sites of discursive and social struggle in which social reality is constructed through attempts to partially fix meanings and concepts in a discursive field and to relate them to institutionalized structures. Torfing emphasizes that discourse theory has persuaded many mainstream theorists to pay attention to new issues such as knowledge paradigms, identity formations, and the discursive construction of sedimented norms, values, and symbols (Torfing 2005: 4) (e.g., Zappettini 2015, 38ff; 48ff).

From a different perspective, scholars from political sciences and philosophy have regarded European institutions investing in the project of unification with a distinct “degree of transnational European sentiment” (Kaye 2009: 56). Of course, Habermas (2001) has always argued that the European project could promote new civic ideals and a “civic patriotism” that would bring Europeans together in a post-nationalistic spirit.

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2 Indeed, she employs “discursive institutionalism” as the framework for analysis, which integrates the analysis of “ideas”, “constructivism” in international relations, and a range of framing and agenda-setting approaches in policy analysis. Moreover, Schmidt points inter alia to the influence of post-structuralist and post-modernist approaches as well as to CDS. The methodology, however, remains unspecified, though certainly adequate, and oscillates between a qualitative content analysis and the identification of macro-propositions. As Schmidt concedes, “the article uses a number of these methodological approaches as it examines the political dimension of the Eurozone’s economic crisis. In so doing, the article also points to the scope and limits of such approaches, as it shows which aspects of the crisis a given approach best illuminates, which it may ignore or obscure as a result of its methodological focus, and with which other approaches it is more complementary or contradictory in its interpretation of the crisis.” (Schmidt 2014: 246).

On the other hand, as Malmberg and Stråth (2002) maintain that, since the Enlightenment, the term “European identity” has been colonized by many political narratives, and specifically those of the elites because of “the interpretive power contained in the concept [of Europe]” (Malmberg/Stråth 2002: 3; Wodak/Boukala 2014; 2015a, b).

For Ifversen (2002), “European identity” is a concept which replaces the universalistic idea of “European culture” in a shift from an essentialist to a constructivist conceptualization of Europe (e.g., Krzyżanowski 2010: 52ff). He argues that,

*as culture relates to forces that actually shape and have shaped Europe, identity points directly to the discursive level where peoples – consciously or unconsciously – create ‘Europes’ with which to identify (Krzyżanowski 2010: 14).*

Furthermore, Mole (2007) illustrates how constructions of European identity in national-political discourses have undergone profound changes after 1989 (fall of the Iron Curtain) and 2004 (EU-enlargement). Indeed, these distinctions have become even more relevant in the debates over about Turkey’s possible accession to the EU and new developments since 2015 and the attempted coup against the AKP government in July 2016. Thus, Aydın-Düzgit (2015: 170) states that,

*it is also well known that culture is not the sole discourse topic in the debate on Turkey where the discussions extend to cover a wide range of issues such as security and democracy through which various types of European identities are discursively constructed. Yet, it is a topic whose deeper analysis suggests that among a key group of political actors who have a large presence in the politics and policy-making in the EU member-states, an essentialist and neo-orientalist vision of culture dominates. Aydın-Düzgit (2015: 170)*

A model proposed by Herrmann et al. (2004) captures the interplay between bottom-up and top-down imposed identities using the “Russian Doll” metaphor. Identities are seen as nested inside each other in a pecking order of “belonging and loyalties [...] so that ‘Europe’ forms the outer boundary, while one’s region or nation-state constitutes the core” (Herrmann et al. 2004: 250). A more fluid representation of multiple identities is suggested by Triandafyllidou (2008) and Duchesne (2012) who argue that a significant proportion of EU citizens have been able to integrate Europeanness as a component of individual self-understanding in a variety of “reflexive” combinations alongside local, regional and national identities. Accordingly, Risse (2010) claims that one could think of European identity as a “marble cake” in which “Europe and the EU become intertwined and amalgamated in the various national identity narratives” (87; see also Risse forthcoming) (e.g., Mole 2007: 210ff; Antonsich 2008: 515ff; Zappettini 2015: 58).

According to Weiss (2002: 59), it is in the process of re-constructing and legitimizing Euro-polity, that the identity of the European project is re/constructed and reformulated. The “speculative talks on Europe” have predominantly been characterized by two dimensions, i.e. “(a) of Making meaning of Europe (ideational dimension), (and) (b) of Organizing Europe (organizational dimension)” (Weiss 2002: 62; Wodak/Weiss 2004; Forchtner/Kølvraa 2012). The first dimension

*refers to the idea of Europe, the essence, substance, meaning, so to speak. The second dimension reflects the question of how Europe shall be organized, which institutional forms of decision-making and political framework are appropriate for the future. (Weiss 2002).*

These two discursive dimensions relate to two modes of legitimation, i.e. “(a) legitimation through idea (identity, history, culture), (b) legitimation through procedure (participation, democracy, efficiency)” (Weiss 2002). Frequently, the speculative talks on Europe are supported by a third dimension, i.e. “drawing borders” (geographical dimension), as well as by legitimation through standardization, supported by common references to humanism, social and economic standards, etc.

### 3.2 “Doing Europe”

In a different discourse-historical and ethnographic study, Krzyżanowski and Oberhuber (2007) analyzed how EU political and institutional identity is constructed from a diversity of views and opinions which are rarely condensed into a coherent, collective vision. The proof of such a lack of common vision for the EU was already apparent in the outcome of the European Convention; i.e., in the controversial Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe (2003) (e.g., Wodak 2007; Krzyżanowski 2010: 43ff). Krzyżanowski, moreover, proposes a model of a multilevel discursive construction of European identities, which he conceptualizes,

*(a) On a strictly “European level” (explaining the concrete interconnection between social and political developments taking place in Europe) and (b) on the level of explanation of social processes in a general (and, to an extent, global) way. (Krzyżanowski 2010: 62)*

Wodak (2011b) analyses different discursive and material practices in her ethnographic and discourse-historical study of the European Parliament: European institutions are characterized by an internal heterogeneity which is constructed at both the macro level of discourses and ideologies, as well as at the micro level of everyday practices (i.e., “the backstage”). The latter is explored by shadowing and interviewing MEPS. This heterogeneity involves deep-seated contradictions which are frequently manifested in conceptual metaphors. Accordingly, we are confronted with “Old and New Europe”, with “core and periphery”, with geographical and religious arguments, or with visions of a neo-liberal market in contrast to the European social model. Moreover, a number of evaluations and standard topoi about Europe figured especially prominently in these data: that EU Member States are bound together historically and culturally; that there is an added value in being part of the Union; that the EU is the way to the future; and that part of what distinguishes Europe from other political/geographical entities is its social character (Wodak 2011: 64). This last characteristic, that Europe is known for its social models and that it is essential that this be retained in the future, is one that also occurs repeatedly in reference to questions concerning employment issues (e.g., Muntigl et al. 2000).

Importantly, such ethnographic and discourse-oriented studies allow capturing the “daily institutional logic” of European integration which does not proceed according to any rational choice models but follows



routines which remain difficult for outsiders to comprehend. Moreover, a number of studies have dealt with the formation of Europeanness from bottom-up positioning. For example, Millar and Wilson (2007) investigate the discourses of a cross-section of “ordinary” citizens focusing on the micro level of every-day talk of what it means to be European. Covering, inter alia, issues of identity and minority languages, the authors maintain that the discursive construction of Europeanness involves the enactment of multiple affective dimensions of belonging as well as elements of “pragmatic utility” (e.g. Kølvråa 2016). In this vein, Doerr (2010) examines the discourses of members of the European Social Forum as an emergent form of transnational public sphere and as a “laboratory” for the discursive construction of “another Europe”.

### *3.3 Analyzing Media Reporting*

A large group of scholars has explored how European identities are represented in and by the media: Bayley and Williams (2012) investigated how Europeanness has been linguistically constructed in the news media of Italy, France, and the UK, and offer empirical insights into the different semantic interpretations of “citizenship”. Media discourse has also provided important data for examining the construction of “peripheral” European identities in the press coverage of the Lisbon Treaty (Sowinska 2009) and the role of national discourses in the construction of multilingual European identities in national newspapers at the time of the 2004 EU enlargement (Krzyżanowski 2010). Boukala (2013) juxtaposed the analysis of Greek media with the reporting of other European media outlets about the Greek crisis 2010 whereas Angouri and Wodak (2014) traced the heated British online media debates on the developments of the Greek crisis.

Moreover, the role of the media was the focus of a longitudinal study conducted by Triandafyllidou et al. (2009) who analyzed the extent of trans nationalization in the period from 1956 (Hungarian crisis) until 2006 (Mohammed Cartoon crisis) of the European Public Sphere in reporting international crises in post-war Europe in eight national contexts. Triandafyllidou et al. (2009) highlight the salience of national filters in creating different conceptualizations of Europe as a geographical entity, an economic space, or a cluster of values, which is typically invoked to warrant individual national interests. National interests, it seems, override traditional cleavages between leftwing or rightwing oriented news outlets in the European member states (e.g., Oberhuber et al. 2005). Indeed, Zappettini (2015) elaborates the transnational dimension more succinctly as an ever more crucial element of European integration.

Investigating European integration from a DS or CDS point of view allows relating the micro-level of the production, reproduction and dissemination of discourses of inclusion and exclusion across many fields and genres to the macro-strategies of top-down imposed policies and strategies in systematic ways. The dynamics of European integration can be traced in detail, across social fields and institutions, involving a huge range of actors and public spheres. This section provides an overview of three relevant strands of interdisciplinary research on European integration: identity politics and the production and reproduction of “Europeanness”; identity politics in European institutions, i.e. “doing Europe”; and finally, media reporting about European debates and European crises.

## 4. Legitimizing Fences and Walls – the Austrian Case 2015/16

### 4.1 Legitimation and Argumentation from a DHA Perspective

In this case study which analyzes the development of controversial political positions about the so-called refugee-crisis in Austria over more than one year (2015/16), I am particularly interested in the many ways policy changes are legitimized in order to be acceptable against the background of democratic and human rights values. In conclusion, I discuss the tensions between the EU institutions and the nation states in respect to this crisis: as no general EU asylum agency exists which could deal with the many transnational humanitarian, security, and economic dimensions of asylum, several member states feel obliged to deal with these problems their own way while simultaneously legitimizing their decisions by appealing to the EU.

<sup>3</sup>The examples are selected from a huge corpus of 6,701 texts, published between April 2015 and February 2016, all dealing with “the refugee crisis” compiled from the 11 national newspapers in Austria, (i.e. Der Standard, Die Presse, Heute, Kleine Zeitung, Kronen Zeitung, Kurier, Oberösterreichische Nachrichten, Österreich, Salzburger Nachrichten, Tiroler Tageszeitung, Wiener Zeitung) as well as 4 magazines (Profil, News, Biber, Die Zeit). The sub-corpus on “building a fence/wall” was then compiled on a thematic and lexical basis, comprising 1,697 texts.

*Table 1:* Selected List of content-related Topoi in discriminatory Discourses about Immigration

Topos	Warrant
Topos of advantage or usefulness	If an action from a specific relevant point of view will be useful, then one should perform it.
Topos of uselessness or disadvantage	If one can anticipate that the prognosticated consequences of a decision will not occur, then the decision has to be rejected.
Topos of threat or Topos of danger	If there are specific dangers or threats, one should do something to counter them.
Topos of humanitarianism	If a political action or decision does or does not conform to human rights or humanitarian convictions and values, then one should or should not make it.
Topos of burden or weighing down	If a person, an institution or a country is burdened by specific problems, one should act in order to diminish those burdens.
Topos of finance	If a specific situation or action costs too much money or causes a loss of revenue, one should perform actions that diminish those costs or help to avoid/mitigate the loss.
Topos of reality	Because reality is as it is, a specific action/ decision should be taken/ made.
Topos of numbers	If the numbers prove a specific topos, a specific action should be taken/ not carried out.

*Source:* Author, adopted from Reisigl/Wodak 2001: 74-80.

<sup>3</sup> These data were collected in a 3-year research project funded by the Austrian Science Foundation FWF, P 27153.



It becomes apparent that overlaps exist between some legitimation strategies and related topoi (see Table 1), for example “authorization” frequently makes use of the topos of authority; or the ‘authority of tradition’ is linked to the topos of history. Indeed, the topos of history plays a significant role as many political parties, NGOs, and politicians allude to past dealings with refugees, such as in WWII or during the Yugoslavian war in the 1990s. The topos of comparison integrates well with moralization by analogy. Mythopoesis (using anecdotes and stories as legitimation strategy) is related to the argumentum ad exemplum, and so forth. Of course, the various strategies can be realized by other means as well, for example by specific predication (attributes), nomination (labelling) strategies or a range of fallacies. In this way, the interdependence of legitimation strategies and argumentation schemes becomes explicit.

Table 2: Taxonomy of Legitimation Strategies

<p><b>Authorization</b></p> <p><i>Authority</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Personal Authority</u>: Authority based on institutional status of individuals/groups</li> <li>• <u>Impersonal Authority</u>: Authority originating from laws, policies, regulations, etc.</li> <li>• <u>Expert Authority</u>: Academic, scientific expertise or other type of credible knowledge</li> <li>• <u>Role Model Authority</u>: Popularity and acceptability of positions of “role models or opinion leaders” (p. 107)</li> </ul> <p><i>Custom</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Authority of Tradition</u>: Acceptability of what is claimed to have always been done</li> <li>• <u>Authority of Conformity</u>: Acceptability of what everyone or most people do</li> </ul> <p><b>Moralization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Evaluation</u>: Legitimation of positions and practices via evaluative adjectives</li> <li>• <u>Abstraction</u>: “Referring to practices... in abstract ways that “moralize” them by distilling from them a quality that links them to discourses of moral values” (p. 111)</li> <li>• <u>Analogy</u>: Relying on legitimating or delegitimizing force of comparisons and contrasts</li> </ul> <p><b>Rationalization</b></p> <p><i>Instrumental Rationalization</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Goal Orientation</u>: Focusing on goals, intentions, purposes as envisaged by people</li> <li>• <u>Means Orientation</u>: Focusing on aims embedded in actions “as a means to an end”</li> <li>• <u>Outcome Orientation</u>: Stressing, “the outcome of actions... as something that turned out to exist in hindsight” (p. 115)</li> </ul> <p><i>Theoretical Rationalization</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Definition</u>: Characterizing activities in terms of other already moralized practices</li> <li>• <u>Explanation</u>: Characterizing people as actors “because doing things this way is appropriate to the nature of these actors” (p. 116)</li> <li>• <u>Prediction</u>: Foreseeing outcomes based on some kind of expertise</li> </ul> <p><b>Mythopoesis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Moral Tales</u>: Narrating rewarding decisions and practices of social actors</li> <li>• <u>Cautionary Tales</u>: Associating nonconformist and deviant decisions and practices with undesirable consequences</li> </ul>
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Source: Author, extrapolated from Van Leeuwen 2008.

Table 2 presents a tentative taxonomy of legitimation strategies (e.g., Van Leeuwen 2008; Van Leeuwen/Wodak 1999), some of which are salient in this debate (Wodak 2017b).

Due to space restrictions, I cannot elaborate on the detailed quantitative analysis in this paper (see Figure 1 below); the examples analyzed below were chosen due to their salience according to three distinctive criteria: first, a chronology was established of the important regional, national and more global events which had a huge impact on the discourse about fences and walls in the period from July 2015 to February 2016 (see Table 3). Each event was secondly characterized by a specific political statement (by government or opposition politicians), which immediately dominated the headlines in the national newspapers with the widest outreach. These utterances (and the headlines) were thirdly decontextualized and repeated most frequently in our entire corpus over several days.<sup>4</sup>

The DHA applied here enables the tracing and understanding of the political debate about “fences and walls” and the emerging qualitative shift in policy-making in Austria in a diachronic and context-dependent way: from a “welcoming culture” to a “culture of exclusion and walls” (see also Wodak 2015b).

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<sup>4</sup> For reasons of space, I refer readers interested in the entire quantitative analysis and full details of the corpus to Rheindorf and Wodak (2017a).

## 4.2 Brief Summary of regional, national and transnational Contexts

Table 3: Periodization in the Debate about Borders: July 2015 – February 2016.

- In the course of 7/15, neighboring Hungary begins to build its border fence, a move which is at first heavily criticized by the SPÖ and the ÖVP.
- On 26/8/15, 71 refugees are found dead, locked in an airtight truck near Parndorf, a small town in Burgenland on the route from the Hungarian border to Vienna.
- German Chancellor Merkel states on 11/9/15 that the right to asylum cannot have a maximum quota. Austrian Chancellor Faymann (SPÖ) publicly aligns with Merkel's policy.<sup>5</sup>
- Throughout September and October, during regional election campaigns in Vienna and Upper Austria, Vienna's Mayor Häupl (SPÖ) speaks out for "taking a stand" for refugees,<sup>6</sup> while the FPÖ campaigns for a limit to asylum seekers and for cutting their social security.<sup>7</sup>
- On 26/10/15, Minister of Exterior Affairs and Integration Kurz (ÖVP) proposes building a border fence to trigger a "domino-effect" in other countries along the Balkans route.<sup>8</sup>
- On 11/11/15, the government officially decides to build a "border management system" that will include a fence, although Faymann (SPÖ) maintains that it is just "a small door with side-parts".<sup>9</sup>
- After numerous reports of sexual assaults by "Arab- or African-looking men" during New Year's celebrations in Cologne,<sup>10</sup> the debate intensifies.
- On 14/1/16, Vice-Chancellor Mitterlehner (ÖVP) calls for "a drastic reduction of refugees down to zero".<sup>11</sup> The FPÖ's Vice-Chair Darmann demands an immediate halt to all immigration and closing the borders.<sup>12</sup>
- On 20/1/16, the two governing parties unexpectedly agree to set a maximum limit of 37,500 per year. On 24/1/16, Faymann (SPÖ), having completely reversed his position, says, "Refugee number 37,501 will be turned back at the border".<sup>13</sup>
- On 24/2/16, Mikl-Leitner (ÖVP) praises the closed borders along the Balkans route as a "chain reaction of reason".<sup>14</sup>

Source: Author.

5 [http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS\\_20150912\\_OTS0032/](http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20150912_OTS0032/).

6 <http://www.news.at/a/michael-h%C3%A4upl-boot-lange-nicht-voll>. This clear stance polarizes the Vienna elections, which were won by the SPÖ.

7 <http://diepresse.com/home/politik/innenpolitik/4822750/>.

8 <http://kurier.at/politik/inland/kurz-man-ist-nicht-rechts-wenn-man-realist-ist/160.273.015>.

9 <http://steiermark.orf.at/news/stories/2741734/>.

10 See the report submitted by Interior Minister Rolf Jäger to the regional government after the "Cologne events": [https://www.land.nrw/sites/default/files/asset/document/bericht\\_innenausschuss\\_12012016.pdf](https://www.land.nrw/sites/default/files/asset/document/bericht_innenausschuss_12012016.pdf).

11 <http://ooe.orf.at/news/stories/2752375/>.

12 <http://diepresse.com/home/politik/innenpolitik/4903499/>.

13 <http://derstandard.at/2000029660627/>.

14 <http://diepresse.com/home/politik/innenpolitik/4932380/>.

In summary, one can identify several national and transnational/global tipping points in the debates linked to specific events, such as the death of 71 refugees, the picture of the drowned child Aylan Kurdi on 2/9/15 near Bodrum and the closing of the Hungarian borders; on a different level, there are regional influences tied to election campaigns in the Austrian regions of Styria, Burgenland, Upper Austria and Vienna. In these campaigns, the perceived pressure from the Austrian right-wing populist Freedom Party (FPÖ) led all the mainstream parties with the exception of the Vienna chapter of the SPÖ to align more and more with the FPÖ's position. The next major tipping point were the terrorist acts in Paris, 13/11/2015, and after this, Cologne, 31/12/15, which shifted the debate from welcoming refugees to "protecting our (Austrian/German) women from illegal migrants" in significant ways. Under ever more pressure – none of the policies decided on at the EU level being implemented –, Austria's foreign minister Kurz (ÖVP) proposed to close the Balkan route. Polarization in the upcoming Austrian presidential election in 4/16 was the next tipping point for Austria in at least two respects: The disastrous result for the SPÖ candidate would later lead to the resignation of Chancellor Faymann; and, in the run-off, the two remaining candidates (from the FPÖ and the Green Party) would manifest diametrically opposed positions dividing the electorate almost exactly in half.

#### *4. 3 Constructing "Fortress Europe"*

##### *4.3.1 Semantic and lexical Analysis of "Border" (Grenze)*

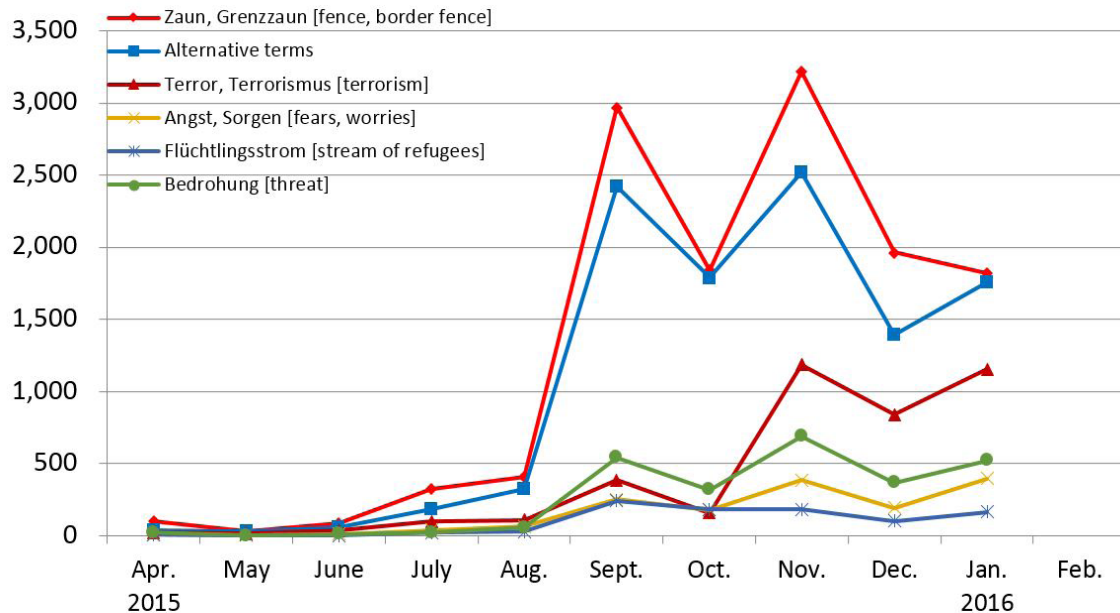
Lexical analysis indicates a striking plethora of border-related terminology, some of which can be considered neologisms. These terms proliferate in the course of the debate's development over time, as though there were a need to lexically populate the border region and demarcate or reinforce the border itself. Compounding with *Grenze*, i.e. "border", is shown to be very productive in this context (166 unique compound lemmas) (e.g., Rheindorf/Wodak 2017a).

Via a corpus linguistic analysis, the lexical items were sorted into six groups: the border region (e.g., people and towns on the Austrian side of the border); the border itself; the border's demarcation (e.g., fence); measures to protect and safeguard the border (e.g., controls, police, soldiers); orderly openings of the border (e.g., regular commuter traffic, gates); and threats to the border (e.g., illegal crossings, riots). It is important to note that the word "border" actually occurs more frequently in spite of having used the search term "border fence" to compile our corpus; while notions that commonly delineate the "line of the border" are rare, there is a proliferation of euphemistic terms compounded with "border", and thus tied to the border space. The latter re-semiotises the physical object of the "fence" as actions and measures such as "securing" and "protecting" or such abstractions as "control" and "management". There is also a notable absence of compounds that build further on "border fence", whereas there exist numerous three-part compounds that build on "border space" or "border control".

The border fence being a highly symbolic referent, in particular with respect to the Iron Curtain, which once separated Austria from its Eastern neighbors, there was intense negotiation of terminology between the political actors involved. Since "border fence" is negatively connoted, those in favor of building it – initially

only the ÖVP, later on also the SPÖ – sought to establish euphemisms deeply embedded in moralizing and rationalizing legitimization. This was undermined, however, by the Vice-Chancellor and the Minister of Interior Affairs, both ÖVP, beginning to appeal for a “Festung Europa”, i.e. Fortress Europe (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



Source: Author.

Figure 1 shows frequencies per month for “border fence” and all its major euphemisms. It furthermore indicates the correlation between the focus on building a fence and the threat of terrorism, at least for the two initial peaks in September and November. As will be illustrated below, the topos of danger is interdiscursively related to the discourse about terrorism and security. This link seems to be dissolved after the fence is built (and appears to be ineffective) and as, in the wake of the incidents of sexual harassment during New Year’s Eve in Cologne, the mediatized threat scenario shifts from an external to an internal one. A fence, symbolic though it may be, is not well suited to protecting the national body constructed as the gendered body of Austrian women. New moral and rational legitimization strategies substantiate the danger posed by refugees and migrants, frequently related to religion (Islam) and to a “clash of cultures”, thus re-emphasizing the topos of culture.

#### 4.3.2 Legitimizing and Delegitimizing Walls

##### Example 1

*Europe will not fail only if we succeed in solving the asylum problem in a solidary and orderly manner. That means: The outer borders [of the EU] must be controlled; hotspots must be established at the outer borders as emergency intake centres, and every asylum applicant who illegally travels onward will be transferred back there. And then there has to be an orderly verification procedure that corresponds*

*to the EU's system of law. That means: Europe, in principle, is becoming the "Fortress Europe". (Vice-Chancellor Mitterlehner, 19/9/15 )*

In Example 1, Mitterlehner (ÖVP) employs an instrumental rationalization legitimization strategy: a list of control measures to be applied immediately as otherwise the EU will fail. The legitimization is substantiated by the topoi of danger (the EU might fail), responsibility (governments should act in an orderly fashion) and control: only by carefully controlling borders, immigrants, and asylum seekers, will the EU succeed. The argument then continues – if all these measures were implemented, the EU would be transformed into a "Fortress Europe", legitimized by the danger of apparent failure.

### Example 2

*In an interview with ÖSTERREICH Werner Faymann heavily criticized the refugee policy in Hungary. Faymann: "The way the Hungarians are treating asylum seekers, that's not the way. But above all, it is unacceptable that refugees are coming from Hungary in fear, panic, starving and partly traumatized. When trains, that are meant to lead to freedom, are suddenly diverted into camps, then I am reminded of dark times in our history. We acted differently during the Hungarian Crisis and put little red-white-and-red flags on the border to take away the fear of the people who were fleeing. (Werner Faymann, 12/9/2015 )*

In Example 2, Faymann justifies Austria's open border policies in autumn 2015 by moral legitimization, combined with the topoi of history and comparison. First, he mentions that the refugees arrive in Austria from Hungary in a state of "fear and panic", triggering pity. Secondly, he compares the fact that the refugees were not told where the trains were taking them to the Holocaust, implied by the phrase "dark times in our history". And thirdly, he reminds the Hungarians of 1956 when Austria took in almost 200,000 Hungarian refugees who were fleeing the Soviet occupation. Thus, Faymann makes a strong case for humanitarian border policies, in contrast to the Hungarian and both the ÖVP and FPÖ politicians. Two ideological positions in respect of the refugee crisis are made explicit. Different values are appealed to, legitimised by a range of strategies, evoking fear on the one hand, solidarity on the other.

### Example 3

*There is a difference, whether one builds a border or whether one builds a small door with side-parts. There is no fence around Austria. This is a technical security measure that does not box in Austria. (Werner Faymann, 28/10/15 )*

Faymann, who had vehemently opposed the building of a wall for several months (see Table 3), uses a euphemistic expression which focuses on a door, reframing the wall as "the side-parts" of the door, thus backgrounding the literal fence. This is legitimization by theoretical rationalization – furthermore, Faymann euphemistically states that the wall only implies technical security measures (instrumental legitimization). Compared to Example 4, one is confronted with a significant change of opinion in the SPÖ, except for the Mayor of Vienna, who at the same time repeatedly recontextualizes a famous metaphor from the late 1930s, namely that "the boat is not full", an instrumental legitimization strategy substantiated by a topos

of numbers (if the boat (i.e., our country) is not full, then there is room for more refugees) . However, under ever more pressure from the ÖVP and the FPÖ, the humanitarian position is silenced and theoretical and instrumental rationalisation legitimisation strategies override any opposition to building a fence/wall/ Fortress Europe (e.g., Examples 4 and 5).

#### Example 4

Mitterlehner described the present situation in extremely drastic terms: *Until last August, one had thought it possible to handle the refugee movement with the “traditional Austrian attitude”. By now, however, there was “an actual mass migration” on the way to Austria, Germany and Sweden. That would constitute an “extreme situation”, therefore one would have to act and “set limits”.*

Here, Mitterlehner evokes a scenario of imminent danger, which forces Austria to abandon its “traditional attitude” and act immediately by setting clear limits. The topos of numbers (which can be identified by the vague quantifier of “mass migration”) is used to substantiate this instrumental rationalization legitimization. Similarly, the two ÖVP ministers (Interior and Foreign Affairs) reinforce their responsibility in setting immediate measures in order to protect Austria and the EU.

#### Example 5

After the summit, it was said they wanted to set joint measures to severely limit the continuing refugee movement along the so-called Balkans route in the direction of central Europe. “We want a chain reaction of reason”, explained Mikl-Leitner. Mikl-Leitner said that the streams of migrants had to be stopped and described it as a life-or-death issue for the EU. Europe, she said, was facing “its biggest challenge since the Second World War”. Minister Kurz again emphasized that all participating countries would prefer a joint European solution, but in the absence of such a solution were forced to take national measures: “Austria is over-whelmed, plain and simple.”

Both Ministers emphasise the imminent danger awaiting Austria and the EU, if ‘streams of migration’ could not be stopped (“a life or death issue for the EU”, an exaggeration which argues using a topos of danger). Following a comparison with the end of WWII (topos of history), Kurz regrets that there is no European solution. This fact then legitimizes national measures, via a topos of burden (“If Austria is overwhelmed, measures have to be taken”). Moreover, Mikl-Leitner appeals to reason by creating the neologism of “a chain reaction of reason” which serves as theoretical rationalisation legitimization: Other countries will agree with Austria that closing the Balkan route (i.e. building fences and establishing border management) are reasonable actions and thus to be copied. In this way, the ÖVP constructs itself as the part of the coalition government, which recognises future dangers in time and is prepared to act responsibly, even if this would imply different values, a “new Austrian way”.

Finally, the events in Cologne on 31/12/15 serve as further evidence for the imminent danger to the EU and its people, especially women. Apart from the topoi of burden and numbers, we encounter an inter-discursive overlap of discourses about security and terrorism with discourses about a “clash of cultures”. Thus, a range of moral legitimization and mythopoesis strategies start dominating the media, specifically



the tabloids, enhanced by the rhetoric of the FPÖ whereas the government enforces legitimation most frequently by authority and rationalisation.

## 5. Explaining Policy Shifts: The Contribution of (Critical) Discourse Studies

Approaching legitimation from a more sociological point of view, Abulof (2016: 11) claims that populist movements (both left- and right-wing) manifest a new kind of political and moral legitimacy – popular legitimacy. Having studied the Arab Spring and oppositional populist movements in the Middle East, Abulof concludes that “legitimacy has become the ‘absolute horizon’ of modern politics: increasingly alluring, forever elusive, and dangerously frustrating”. Popular legitimacy spans, as Abulof maintains, “identity, polity, authority, and policy” (Abulof 2016: 4).

Indeed, when analysing the moralization of borders, the strong appeals to “protect our people and countries against strangers”, identity politics “ascended, as people sought to become not only the source of legitimacy but also its object: their ‘peoplehood’ itself required validation before they could legitimate their politics” (Abulof 2016: 4). A discourse-historical analysis of politicians’ statements about the necessity/non-necessity of building walls and fences to protect Europe and the EU from refugees and migrants, and their recontextualization in the media, from April 2015 to February 2016, provides much evidence for both a new moralization of borders and new forms of legitimation. The legitimation strategies employed are substantiated and realised by many linguistic, rhetorical and pragmatic devices and argumentation schemes, such as *topoi*. Indeed, it is obvious that legitimation and argumentation are interdependent in many complex ways, on many levels of language and discourse.

In sum, this analysis illustrates that normalization is ongoing, while reactivating old imaginaries of protection through fences—an imaginary that is destabilized by new internal threat scenarios of the demonized male migrant (now metonymically associated with Cologne) as an “Other” who is unwilling or even incapable (culturally, mentally, even biologically) of assimilating into the host society (Rheindorf, in press). Counter-discourses from NGOs, experts, and civil society were hardly represented in the terminology-focused mediatization. The debates oscillated between Europeanization (legitimation via authority) and regionalization (impact of regional elections). Borders become “moral,” then, also in the sense that politicians can thus make a claim to be acting responsibly, using cost-and-benefit analyses to protect social security and cohesion—an argument that casts the so-called do-gooders as naïve dreamers of utopian worlds. Deliberative argumentation is, it seems, not possible in such polarized debates.

This case study illustrates in which ways European integration and strategies of inclusion and exclusion can be analyzed by employing theories and methodologies from DS and CDS. Various data sets were collected which allow tracing in systematic detail how hegemonic discourses about the so-called refugee crisis developed; and why and what specific tipping points discursive shifts emerged. Finally, such studies provide evidence of the impact of public debates and controversies on the development and implementation of new policies on migration and on coping with the arrival of refugees in Central Europe 2015/16.



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